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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: JOINT ODC/EXBS END-USE MONITORING TRIP REPORT

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**¶1.** Summary: Monitoring results of U.S. funded communications equipment in Tajikistan are positive. The equipment is being used along the porous Tajik-Afghan border as intended and is being maintained to the highest degree of serviceability. Some issues were identified, but could be easily overcome with a visit by a Technical Survey team. The proper use and maintenance of this equipment indicates that U.S. counter narcotics and security funding in Tajikistan is not taken for granted.

**¶2.** Background: U.S. government funding through U.S. Army Central Command, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, and the Export and Border Security (EXBS) office provided \$8.1M in radios and radio support equipment from 2007 to 2009 to the Tajik Border Guards (BG), Drug Control Agency (DCA), and Customs Service (CS). This funding purchased Harris High-Frequency radios, Motorola Hand-Held Ultra-High Frequency radios, spare parts, chargers, and solar power equipment. From June 10-19, the Chief, Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), ODC Counter Narcotics Program Manager, the EXBS Advisor, and EXBS Program Management Assistant visited Border Guard and Customs Service locations along the Tajik-Afghan border in the Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) to monitor the use, operation, and condition of the equipment and to inform future equipping decisions.

**¶3.** Otryads are regional BG headquarters roughly equivalent to a US Battalion Headquarters. Zastavas are the equivalent of border outposts where a squad to platoon size element serve. The Harris radios provide long-distance, rough terrain communication capability between Otryads and Zastavas. The Motorola radios are used for short-distance, line-of-sight communication between Zastavas and patrols or stationary guard towers/observation points. Each Otryad is responsible for a 40 to 100 kilometer sector in which the Zastavas are located. From the Zastava, BG Junior Officers, Warrant Officers, and Conscripts execute the day-to-day function of securing the border through random patrols, stationary guard towers, observation and reporting.

**¶4.** Observations: Overall, the radios and radio support equipment are in excellent condition and are being employed as intended. The Harris AN/PRC 150 High-Frequency radio serves as the

communication backbone along the Tajik-Afghan border for Tajikistan's BG. The radio, in various amplified configurations, is the primary communication platform between the Otryad and its Zastavas as well as the Otryad back to BG headquarters in Dushanbe. Each Otryad and Zastava maintains a communication room with the AN/PRC 150 and supporting solar power equipment - batteries, switchboard, and charger/conditioner.

**¶15.** The Motorola radios were observed in use by foot patrols while traveling through the Khatlon region to GBAO but there is limited use of the radios in GBAO. The newer Motorola 340 radios, which this report discusses, had been delivered to the Otryads in GBAO but not yet fielded to the Zastavas. An older model Motorola 140 radio, donated in 2003 by the EXBS office, was observed in most Zastavas but in very limited quantities due to age. A BG Communications Training Team, led by the BG Director of Communications, Colonel Soleh Shekhov, was scheduled to conduct training and field the newer Motorola radios at the end of June and early July.

**¶16.** The Border Guard has established a solid maintenance, support, and training plan for the radios much to the surprise of ODC and EXBS representatives. Each Otryad's Communication Director demonstrated good technical knowledge of the systems, had established an operator training program, and knew who to contact at the next higher level if a system failed. The deliberate approach to fielding, supporting, and training emanates from the BG Directorate of Communication in Dushanbe. The Director, Colonel Shekhov, is known throughout the region and has emphasized care and proper use of the communication

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systems.

**¶17. Issues:** The power source is inadequate. Border Guard representatives stated that some locations did not receive enough sunlight during the winter and spring months to adequately charge radio batteries. During times of limited power, communication is passed via runner between Zastavas. However, ODC and EXBS representatives observed that U.S. provided solar power equipment is being used to power TVs, satellite systems, and teapots. Post recommends a more detailed analysis of whether the Border Guard is prioritizing available electricity sources before deciding how to address this issue.

**¶18. Solar power switchboard and conditioners are not working.**

Four solar power conditioners and switchboards were damaged. The reason given to ODC and EXBS representatives was that the fluctuating current burned the system out too easily. Border Guard representatives have hard-wired the batteries to the power source and bypassed the switchboard and conditioners to fix the problem. Post again recommends a more detailed analysis to determine the reason for conditioners and switchboards malfunctioning. This analysis should be conducted by a two-three man technical team visit with the background and expertise in the installed radios and radio support equipment.

**¶19. Considerations for Future Equipping:** The following is a proposed list of equipment for future purchase consideration based on Border Guard feedback and U.S. observations during the visits. This equipment will be considered in Post's determination of FY 2010 Counter Narcotics funding priorities.

1A. Radio repair parts. The original purchase package included only a basic spare parts package. These repair parts would augment that package and include additional rechargeable batteries, radio faceplates, and hand mikes. Technical replacement parts, the internal circuit boards, are more complicated and best replaced through Harris or Motorola representatives in-country. A more complete package of needs could be developed based on feedback from the two-three man technical team visit recommended in paragraph 3.B.(2) above.

1B. Field Phones. Wire field phones, such as the old U.S. TA 312, will benefit Zastavas that support stationary observation points. They do not require batteries or electricity to operate.

1C. Motion Sensors. Electronic motion sensors could be employed along the border to detect movement, particularly at night. However, the power source challenge would have to be overcome.

1D. Optics. A simple package of optics would greatly enhance security along the border. Binoculars are almost non-existent and the ones on hand are mostly fogged out because of age. A standard Otryad package could include 3 spotting scopes (for observation posts) and 20 binoculars distributed evenly across the Zastavas. Thermal imagery is not recommended because of the additional monitoring requirements, potential for proliferation across the Afghan border, and need for a power source.

1E. Cold Weather Clothing. A basic cold-weather clothing package would enhance the Border Guard's ability to patrol during periods of extreme cold weather. Package would include gloves, boots, Gore-Tex coats, and moisture wicking undergarments.

10: Conclusion: Overall, Tajik Border Guards and Customs

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officials praised the Harris and Motorola radios provided in the past. The equipment has enhanced their operational capabilities along the border by linking elements and headquarters regardless of weather conditions and poor infrastructure. Most significantly, Border Guard Officers and conscripts are caring for and maintaining the radios. This indicates that U.S. funds are not being wasted with respect to developing Tajikistan's communication architecture to limit narcotics trafficking along the Tajik-Afghan border. However, a technical team should be deployed within the next six months to further analyze the issues discussed in this report. This would identify any technical gaps in the current architecture and ensure that the right purchase decisions are made in the future. Additionally, the Tajik Border Guard should be asked to provide detailed reports that link narcotic seizures to this supporting communication architecture to better demonstrate results to dollars spent.

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